

Intermountain Yearly Meeting Epistle
35th Session, June 8th through 14th, 2009
Telling our Stories: Where is God in All This?

Friends everywhere,

Friends came to Intermountain Yearly Meeting to renew and strengthen our connection to the spiritual basis of our work in the world. How should we witness to the unity and love we have received as a holy gift? How do our stories connect us with one another and reveal to us the workings of the Spirit in our lives? Lucy Duncan, our keynote speaker, came not only to tell her story but to help us tell our own. We learned that we each have an internal lexicon of life experiences which have engendered strong emotions. These led us to feel the presence of God or Spirit moving in our lives. Storytelling is a way for each of us to connect with others through our shared emotional responses regardless of background.

Clerk Penny Thron-Weber reminded us that “we need to seek where we are led.” How do we respond to our own leadings and the leadings of others? We shared a great yearning to increase our connections with one another, with God’s creation, and with the divine. This yearning was expressed powerfully through stories shared among us. The Meeting approved the Senior Young Friends’ proposal to start a pilot program of an Intermountain Quaker Summer Camp and agreed to seek affiliation with Friends General Conference. We wrestled the transition of our Yearly Meeting-supported service projects.

Through their quiet friendly service, we felt the support of the Ghost Ranch volunteers and staff. We connected to the natural world through birdsong at dawn and dusk, the smell of sage and juniper, and the vision of drifting cottonwood seeds. Those who arrived for Early Days relaxed and attended seminars. Later, interest groups energized the community.

As a community we renewed our commitment to openness and sensitivity with one another, and as we did so, we trusted the movement of the Spirit among us. Our confidence in Quaker process manifested in our committee work and our daily plenary sessions. The courage and discernment shown by the senior Young Friends in confronting questions of integrity and the energy and commitment exhibited by the Young Adult Friends demonstrated the trust we have placed in each other for the spiritual care of our children was trust rewarded.

Friends greeted with joy the publication of the Intermountain Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice. We offered sincere thanks to all those who participated in the decades of discernment, vision, and revision of this text.

The Eyes Wide Open, Cost of War, and Peace Crane exhibits reminded us of the ongoing call for compassion for those caught in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of us were moved to tears. We called upon Friends everywhere to continue working to end these wars and to manifest the peace testimony in our meetings, our communities, our homes, and our selves.

We celebrated God’s presence among us through intergenerational worship sharing, sewing projects, and the ever-popular color exchange. Young and old danced to live music, sang songs around the campfire, roasted marshmallows, and shared their talents at the annual creativity night.